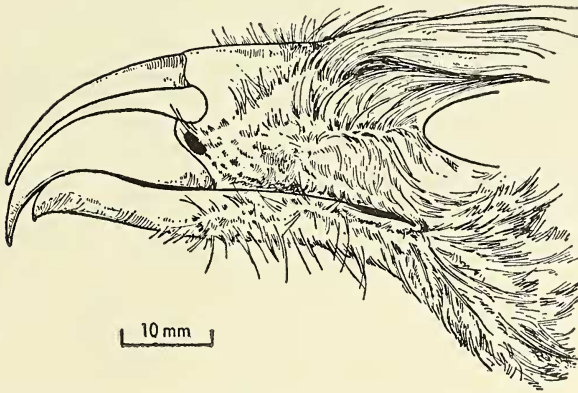


than that at its middle portion, but the length remains unaffected (fig. 1).



Lateral view of the head of a Large Indian Kite showing split bill.

To all intents and purposes it appears that the upper mandible has split up during the embryonic development of the kite, for which no reason can be assigned. This split-billed condition does not seem to have affected the normal life and activities of the specimen.

I am thankful to Dr. Walter Koelz and the American Museum of Natural History, New York, for allowing me to examine the specimen, and to Shri A. Karmakar for preparing the final sketch from my original drawing under my supervision.

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#### 14. A NOTE ON NEWLY HATCHED CHICKS OF THE SLATYBREASTED RAIL, *RALLUS STRIATUS* LINNAEUS.

A pair of Slatybreasted Rail bred in the wader aviary of the Calcutta Zoo this year and four eggs were successfully hatched out. On the 30th July, one chick was hatched, and from the remaining three eggs three chicks came out on the 31st. While the first chick died in the nesting basket on the 31st, the three others descended to the ground along with the mother on the 1st August.

A search through the available literature for any record on the newly hatched chicks of the Slatybreasted Rail, proved abortive. Coward in his 'Birds and their Young' (1923, p. 57), however, says, whatever the plumage of the adult rails the young in their down dress are self-coloured, blackish grey or sooty.' I, therefore, give my observations below.

*Chick in down.*—Thicket woolly down black all over. Bill, legs, feet and claws black. The bill is proportionately a very small and